

Clamming

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Red Tide Washes Away

By LAUREN GRILLI

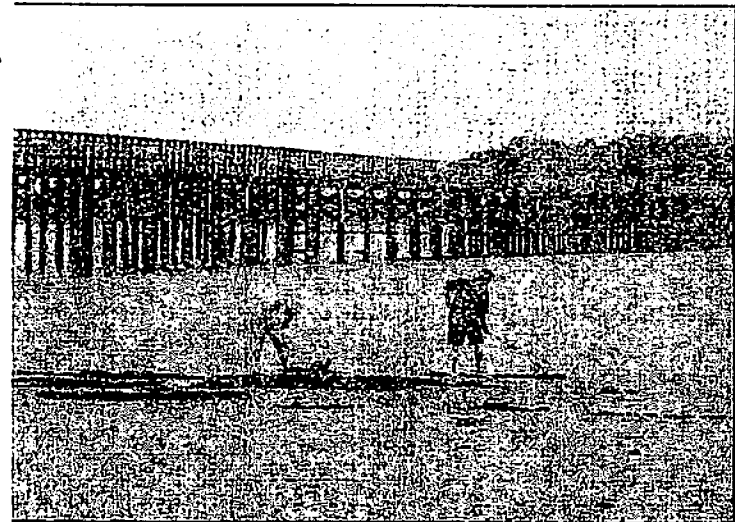
Last Friday not only marked the beginning of a long holiday weekend, but the beginning of the end of the red tide disaster.

After nearly five weeks of repeated testing and waiting, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has lifted the ban on harvesting shellfish in certain Massachusetts waters, including Duxbury Bay.

"We're in great shape

said Harbormaster Don Beers. "People were out shellfishing over the holiday weekend, plus, we had some great weather for it."

According to Beers and the Division of Marine Fisheries, only the inside bay is open for shellfish harvesting. The outside beach still remains closed to shellfishing, which is not unusual, because the tides can affect the movement of the



Eager aquaculturists hit Duxbury Bay on Friday after the ban on shellfishing was lifted.

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toxic algae.

The waters re-opened only days after the United States Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration agreed to give financial assistance in the form of low-interest loans to Massachusetts' aquaculturists.

"It's going to take some time to get the markets back up to speed," said Christian Horne of Island Creek Oysters. "It's great that we're offered financial assistance, but I'd rather see people buy shellfish. That's better than any loan."

"Now it's time for us to get back to work," said Skip Bennett, also of Island Creek Oysters. "We're starting to get back in sync with our customers in Manhattan, Chicago, and Miami, letting them know that we can sell again."

Bennett said that during the red tide disaster, restaurants that usually buy from his business began buying their shellfish from companies on Prince Edward Island. Now that Island Creek Oysters can harvest shellfish again, Bennett said that some companies across the United States have been placing large orders.

Horne also said he would like to see the media still give attention to the shellfish industry now that the red tide disaster has begun to recede. To the television stations, he says, "come back now that we're open."

"The time off gave us a chance to catch up on growing seed," said Bennett. "Now we can harvest again, and the oysters are a little bigger. We didn't lose anything during the closure, because we stayed busy cleaning up and growing seed."

"But I've missed eating shellfish. I like to eat oysters every day."

Marshfield residents Louise Nelson and Rene DeVos dug for clams in Duxbury Bay on Friday afternoon. "We're happy to be able to clam again," said DeVos. "We're going to eat these tonight."

The Division of Marine Fisheries also warns shellfishermen that certain shellfish species, including ocean quahogs, surf clams, and carnivorous snails, are not safe to harvest, even from newly opened waters. This is because these species may still have some of the toxin concentrated in their system, according to the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Bennett said he thinks the red tide disappeared because it doesn't flourish in warm water.

"In the fall, the conditions might be right for another bloom, but historically this area has not had red tide except in extraordinary conditions," he said.

Over the next few weeks, the Division of Marine Fisheries expects that more areas on the South Shore and Cape Cod will open for harvesting.